EGYPTIAN SONG AND MUSIC

HENRY F. LUTZ

[Reprint from the UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA CHRONICLE, April, 1925]

EGYPTIAN SONG AND MUSIC

HENRY F. LUTZ

The Classical writers all agree that song and music held an important place in ancient Egypt. This testimony is confirmed by the monuments. The large number of pictorial representations of song and musical entertainment shows that these were never lacking on festive occasions or in the everyday life of the people.

The patron deity of song and music was considered to be the moon god, Thoth, who, more generally, was the god of all learning and the patron of the scribe. Various sacred writings are said to have originated with him, among them the two *Books of the Singer*. Less frequently, the musical art is attributed to the goddess, Isis.

The texts nowhere give any indication of the manner in which song or music was rendered; we are therefore unable to arrive at any information whatever pertaining to the essential character of musical execution. This fact is particularly deplorable, since, next to language, nothing more truly reveals the characteristics of a people than its songs. "Volksweise," the German word for 'popular song,' exemplifies the truth of this statement. The popular song lingers longest of all other national or racial peculiarities. When language has succumbed to the necessity of assimilating other idioms, when it has even been utterly lost, when old customs, in changing conditions of life, have been entirely forgotten, when fashions have accommodated themselves to those of the ruling race, there will yet remain a people's musical sense and comprehension, its native ability

for musical expression, and even the original mode of this expression. Modern Egyptian popular music renders the songs in a somewhat monotonous delivery, in a nasal tone, of often repeated short strophes. The delivery is interrupted at regular intervals by a loud shriek, which serves as a refrain or contains a supplication addressed to a god, and which has no connection with the song itself. Delivery may have been somewhat similar in the ancient days, for through all the development of Egyptian poetry, in the popular songs and in the higher poetic productions as well, identity of phrase and sound, endlessly repeated, delighted the ear of the Egyptians—of the ancient Egyptians perhaps more than the modern. In fact, these repetitions of identical phrases and sounds, in complete sentences and in the opening and the closing words of a line, became in time, a fixed law in Egyptian poetry; and we will not be far wrong if we assume that this practice was applied also to their songs and their music. The incremental repetition which later came into use, by which part of a line of a song or poem was repeated, may, indeed, have arisen as a result of this peculiar method of delivery.

Strong emphasis was always placed upon the rhythm. The musical rhythm of the song depended upon the peculiar metrical structure of the poem being sung; that is, rhythm followed the natural quantity of the syllables, and upon this the Egyptians built their meter. Unfortunately, we are at a loss to determine with any degree of accuracy the metrical verse systems of Egyptian poetry, owing to the fact that their script has no vowels. We may be sure, however, that ancient Egyptian song and music dispensed with fanciful tone beats. The dependence of musical rhythm on the metric structure, furthermore, made it possible to dispense with the necessity for any notation of the rhythm of the melody. This does not imply that the Egyptians simply had recitative musical delivery and did not possess real melodies. Such an implication would be wrong, for recitative song delivery is not a precursor, but merely a modification of melody.

Rhythm, apart from the meter, was assured by means of handclapping during delivery. The clapping of the hands was, apparently, no mere monotonous iteration, but was itself charged with a variety of rhythm, dependent, however, on the rhythmic structure of the song. We may be sure that through it was secured not only a stronger accentuation of the rhythm, but also, by striking the hands together in various ways, many tonal effects as well. Moreover, through quicker or slower movement, the psychic emotions of elevated joy or lamenting sorrow might be well expressed. Thus, by striking the flat hands a dry, sharp, hard sound could be produced, while by striking one hand against a cup-like hollow formed by the other hand, a deep mellow tone resulted. When unaccompanied by any musical instrument, this kind of singing was designated by the term 'singing with the hand.'

Distinct from handclapping was the practice of chironomy, in which the melody was accompanied by corresponding gestures of the hand, particularly the right hand, in order to express more clearly the thoughts and movements underlying the melody. The chief directions of movement of the melody, ascending and descending, could be easily expressed, of course, by a movement of the hand upward or downward; but it appears that for even the smallest rhythmic or melodic movement a corresponding chironomic movement was supplied, so that, in these chironomic gestures, the singers and musicians were able to read the melody, and written notes were unnecessary. Chironomy was at least a working substitute for the written notes.

The chief and most favored instrument of the Egyptians was the harp. Under the Old Kingdom it appeared in various forms, from a small instrument with from four to seven strings to large and elaborately ornamented instruments with as many as twenty or twenty-one strings, probably made of catgut. These latter many-stringed instruments were known to the Greeks, who considered them to be of great antiquity. They, themselves, had strangely preferred the harps which had but seven or eight, or, at the

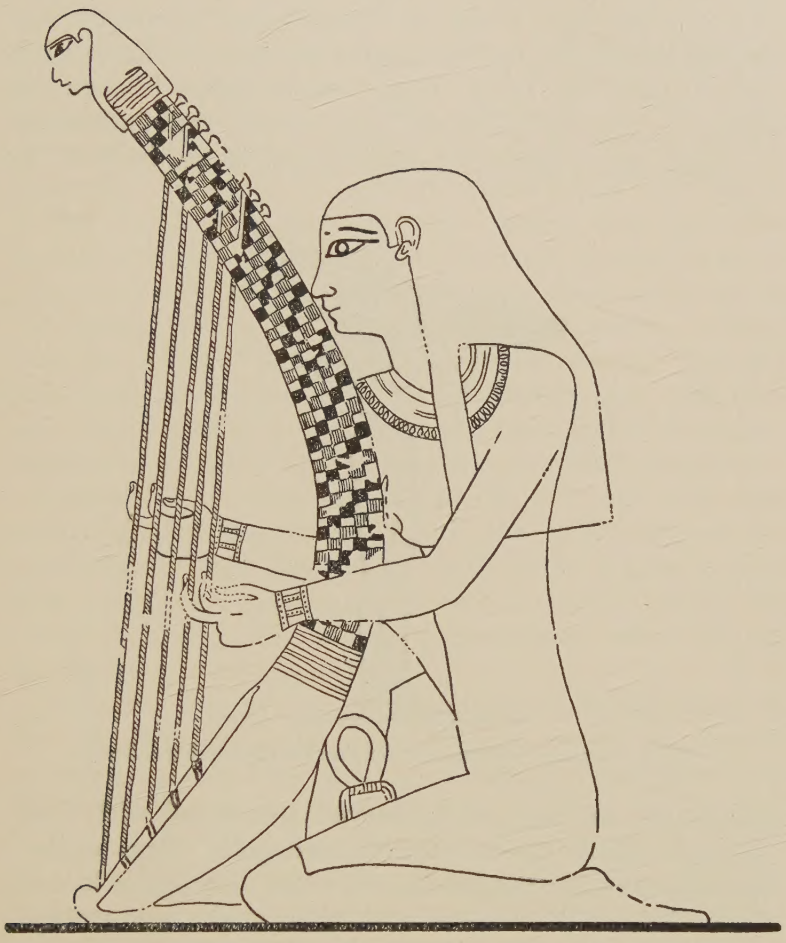

Fig. 1. An Egyptian Harp.

most, eleven strings. The absence of the fore-pillar is peculiar in the construction of the Egyptian harp, and indicates that the instruments were technically well made; otherwise, no considerable high tension could have been procured (see figs. 1 and 2). During the nineteenth and twentieth dynasties, particularly in the time of Rameses III, which marks the epoch during which Egypt became the richest country in the world, great artistic skill and outlay of money was employed in elaboration of the harp. The

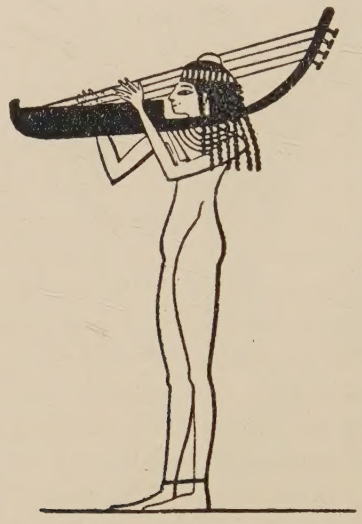

Fig. 2. Egyptian harp placed over the shoulders during delivery.

framework was beautifully carved and inlaid with ivory, turquoise shell, mother-of-pearl, and gold. Pegs made it possible to retune the instrument when a change of key was demanded, while a resonance chamber at the base strengthened the sound. Occasionally there is found a harp belonging to the beginning of the nineteenth dynasty which has the peculiarity that strings are fastened on both sides of the framework, so that, in the pictorial representations, the strings appear to cross in oblique directions. Each side was seemingly keyed differently, thus dispensing with the pegs in order to quickly turn from one tune to another.

The lyre, found in various shapes and sizes, is an Asiatic importation. It first appears on Egyptian monuments during the twelfth dynasty (in the tomb of Khnumhotep at Beni Hasan) where it is held by a Semite who is playing the instrument with both hands. This instrument is also depicted on the Assyrian monuments where we see Semitic prisoners of war playing the lyre as they are being led into captivity.[1] In Babylonia the instrument is of great antiquity, being represented on an archaic stone vase from Bismaya.[2] There it was generally played with a plectrum. Under the New Empire, the lyre became more generally introduced throughout Egypt. It is there found as a small instrument with five strings, which was often carried under the arm by standing, walking, or dancing women. There was also a large instrument, measuring not less than six feet, and containing as many as eighteen strings. The lyre was played in Egypt both with and without the plectrum. Besides the Semitic lyre, it appears that the Lybian lyre, quadrilateral in form, which Pollux (IV, 60) calls the phithyra, also found its way into Egypt. The origin of the harp and the lyre seems to go back to the tightly strung bow, which was discovered to emit a musical sound on being plucked. When this phenomenon was noticed, development naturally followed.

The lute, like the lyre, was unknown to the Egyptians of the Old Kingdom. It seems likewise to be an Asiatic importation, and came into more general use under the New Empire. In common with the later Assyrian lute, it has an exceedingly long neck upon which is fastened an elongated oval board with a resonance chamber. At first, the lute had only one string, but later on there were usually three. (See illustration no. 3, center figure.)

The flute was known and in high favor throughout all periods of Egyptian history, although different designs were preferred at various times. Thus, under the Old Kingdom, the flutes were of considerable length, measuring as much

[1] Rawlinson, *Five Great Monarchies*, vol. 2, p. 164.

[2] *Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft*, Heft 22, p. 392.

as four and five feet. The mouthpiece of the long flute was placed on the upper side of the instrument. Besides this extraordinarily long instrument, a short one, measuring some six to fifteen inches, was in use at the same time. In the New Empire period these instruments seem to have been superseded by the double flute; or at least the double flute seems to have been preferred. In the double flute the mouthpieces were joined and the tubes were either separated at an acute angle, or placed close to each other. The

Fig. 3. Egyptian harpist, lutist, and flutist.

materials from which the flutes were made were reed, the woody stem of the lotus wood, ivory, horn, or bone. The Lybian oblique flute, called (Ath. IV, 175 and 182) the Egyptian monaulus or photinx (whose invention is attributed to Osiris), was made of laurel wood. The pictures of the flutist represent him holding the instrument mostly to the left, but according to Apuleius (Met. XI, 9) the custom was to hold the tube to the right side: "*Obliquis calamus ad aurem porrectum dextram.*" (See also fig. 4.)

Owing to their developed sense of rhythm, the Egyptians employed a number of instruments of percussion, such as the drum, the tambourine, castanets, and the sistrum. The

sistrum in particular was used at divine services and during incantations. It made its first appearance under the Middle Kingdom. In its simplest form, the sistrum consisted of a broad elongated band of metal shaped like a long horseshoe and fastened to a handle which was frequently carved in the shape of the head of the goddess, Hathor. Three to four holes were drilled through the sides of the metal band, and metal bars, fitting very loosely into the holes, were run through them. The bars were then bent at the ends in order to prevent them from slipping out. Three metal rings inserted between each bar heightened the loud tinkling sound made when the sistrum was shaken.

The trumpet was introduced into Egypt at the beginning of the New Empire and remained in use only a few centuries. It was probably brought into Egypt and the Near Eastern lands from some northern Mediterranean country; if we may trust the Greek tradition, it was invented by the Etruscans. The Egyptians, however, received it indirectly through Syria, along with the word for 'trumpet' and 'trumpeter.' In Egypt, it was used exclusively for signaling in battle.

The music of the Old and the Middle Kingdom was pentatonic, that is, there were five tones in one octave. These correspond to the five tones of the black keys on the modern piano. The pentatonic scale was preserved in the New Empire in spite of the foreign influences in the domain of music which were especially strong because of the introduction during this period of a variety of hitherto unknown instruments. The fact, however, that some of the instruments are capable of producing seven or more tones shows that the seven-tone diatonic scale, or something corresponding very closely to it, was very probably known. At least, it seems to show that the new scale was not merely an expansion of the pentatonic scale through the addition of the octave notes. The flute also bears witness that half-tone as well as whole-tone intervals were appreciated.

Music in general played a secondary rôle among the Egyptians. It served mostly as an accompaniment to song and not as an independent second part, for polyphony, which was absent in Greek music, can hardly have been in use in ancient Egypt. Choral song was in unison. Certain songs were adapted to standard melodies, as for instance, the second song to King Senwosret III, translated below, where we find the notation at the end: "It shall be delivered (*scil.* according to the melody) 'Horus extends his frontier, mayest thou repeat eternity.' " Elaborate notations, such as those found in a Sumerian text which treats of the creation of man and seems to contain instructions for musical accompaniment, according to which each line begins with obscure words, like *a-a-a-a-a*, *ku-ku-lu-lu*, *mash-mash-mash*, *lal-lal-shi-mash*, *mash-shi-shi-shi-*, *etc.*, have not been found in Egyptian texts.

In the popular song the thought was not elaborated; from the numerous examples on the monuments in which the pictorial representation of one or more singers is accompanied with an inscription giving the song, we see that, in his popular music, the Egyptian restricted his poem to the expression of a single thought. One has at first the impression that these short passages are but the headings of songs, but this is not the case. Thus the female singer and harpist, Baket, represented in the tomb of the corn-counter, Amenemhet of Thebes (fig. 3),[4] sings:

"Even as thou shinest thus shine the faces of Amon-Rêʿ."

The lutist, Amenemhet, standing behind Baket, sings:

"A joyful day, spending a joyful morn."

And the young woman playing the double flute, who bears the name, Ruiuresti, plays the theme of the short melody:

"Thou art great everlastingly,
Thou art united with eternity."

---

[3] Ebeling, E., *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religioesen Inhalts*, vol. 1, no. 4.

[4] Sethe, K., *Urkunden*, vol. 4, p. 1057; Davies-Gardiner, *The Tomb of Amenemhet*, 1915, plate 15.

Figure 4 pictures an orchestra of seven men who are playing music during the repast of Ka-m-remt.[5] The musicians are divided into three groups, singing and playing harp and flute.

Fig. 4. An Egyptian Orchestra.

In the scene shown in fig. 5 another group of musicians is depicted—a male flutist and two female harpists, representing the king's gentleman, Emsheth, and his two daughters, Pesher-nefert and Mertit. Pesher-nefert sings:

"The Gold-Horus appears in the great portal."

while Mertit accompanies with her instrument the song:

"Thy crown(?) is extolled by Horus."

Fig. 5. The king's gentleman, Emsheth, with his two daughters.

[5] Mogensen, M., *Le Mastaba Egyptien de la Clyptotheque ny Carlsberg* (Copenhagen, 1921), p. 14.

Numerous must have been the so-called labor songs whose singing was a common phenomenon in the ancient Near East.[6] The labor song served as a necessary accompaniment to every tiresome work: the sailors sang their ditty while drawing the ship along the canal, and even the child in the school read in a singsong delivery. All tasks, in fact, were performed more or less to the rhythm of a song in order to ease and to unify the various movements in certain manual labors. The peasant, while driving his oxen over the barley spread on the threshing floor, sang:

"Thresh for yourselves, thresh for yourselves, ye oxen;
Thresh for yourselves, thresh for yourselves, straw for fodder, and barley for your masters.
Do not grant rest to yourselves, for it is cool.
Work for yourselves, work for yourselves, ye oxen;
Work for yourselves, the chaff is for you, the barley for your masters."

The carriers of the sedan chair (fig. 6) sang:

"The sedan carriers are satisfied:
Full it is better than when it is empty."

While engaged in plowing, by means of driving rams over a wet field, the shepherds sang a song which, in the tombs of Ti and Mereruka, is divided into three verses:

"The shepherd is in the water, in the midst of the fish;
He talks to the sheat fish,[7] and greets the . . . . fish.
West! Whither goes the shepherd? He is a shepherd of the West."

In this little song the shepherd comments comically on himself because, after the inundation, he has to go among the fishes through watery places. In the third verse he refers to the idea that he takes a great risk in wading through the wet field: it will bring on a cold which may result in his death, thus leading the shepherd to the West land, a euphemistic phrase for death.

[6] *Vorderasiatische Bibliothek*, vol. 6, p. 102; vol. 7, pp. 56, 88; vol. 10, p. 94, etc.

[7] More especially the Egyptian waller or wels, called the shall, *synodontis schal*.

The poor woman who garners after the harvest sings:

"Should I sleep? Every day I am the first one."

The fisherman sang while drawing the net:

"It comes up and brings us a good catch."

Hay-making, as in other countries, was in Egypt, also, a time of merrymaking. Upon some monuments we see a flute player accompanying the work with his music, while a reaper next to him beats the time and remarks: "Ask of me the ox-song." This song is unknown to us.

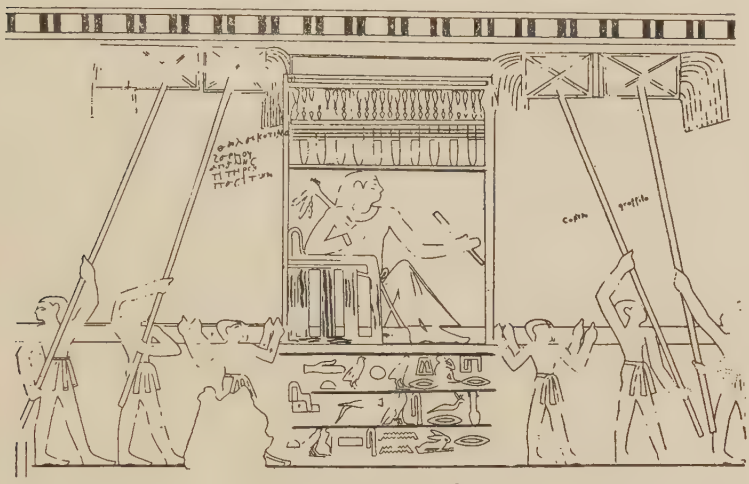

Fig. 6. Sedan carriers.

In the tomb of Nebamon, captain of police, who lived in the time of Thothmes IV (c. 1421–1412 B. C.), we learn the song of the recruits:

He trains recruits,
He trains recruits,
This ruler,
For Amon,
His heart being glad.

From among the love-songs I choose these two as good examples of this kind of poetry:

"Would that I were her negress who is in her company,
Then I would surely see the color of all her limbs."

Cairo Ostracon, No. 25218, lines 13–14.

"The love of my sister[8] is on yonder side;
A river is between,
And a crocodile lies on the sandbank.
When I descend into the water,
I step upon the waves,
My heart is courageous upon the tossing waters,
And the water then is like earth to my feet.
Her love it is which makes me so strong;
Indeed she performs the water-incantation for me.
I see my sister coming,
And my heart rejoices.
My arms are extended
To embrace her." *Cairo Ostracon*, No. 25218, lines 6–9.

The Egyptians, with municipal pride, delighted to sing songs to the glory of their cities and of their temples with their impressive and gorgeous festivals. This was especially true of the Thebans. In the tomb of Amenemhet, mentioned above, are inscribed the following hymns:

(I) How beautiful is the temple of Amon on the New Year's festival,
On the renewal of all the year(?) in its entirety.
He then receives its good things.
Slaughtered are its oxen by the hundreds,
And its wild game of the mountains by the thousands,
For Amon, as his enduring sacrifices,
At the festivals of the seasons.

(II) How beautiful is the temple of Amon-Rê'!
She who spends her days in festivity with the king of the gods within it. . . . .
Is like a (woman) drunken(?) who sits outside of the chamber with disarranged hair(?)
And a . . . . upon her beautiful . . . ., possessing . . . .!

When Rameses II built a new residence in the north-eastern part of the Delta, near to the site where later on was situated the city of Pelusium, the Biblical Rameses (Genesis 47:11), a number of songs were composed in its praise, some of which have been preserved. The one given

[8] The word employed in Egyptian for 'sweetheart.'

below was incorporated in a group of songs which bore the collective title: "The songs of the victories of the lord of Egypt."

His majesty has built himself a castle;
"The victorious" it is called,
Situated between Palestine and Egypt.
It is filled with provisions and food,
And equals Hermonthis,
While its duration is like that of Memphis.
The sun rises in its horizon
And sets in its interior.[9]
All leave their cities,
And are settled in its district.
Its western part is a temple of Amon,
Its southern part a temple of Sutekh.
Astarte is at its eastern,
And Buto at its northern side.
The castle which is therein
Is like unto the horizon of the sky.
Rameses, the beloved of Amon, is within it as god,
"Monthu in the two lands" as herald,
"Rê', the ruler" as vizier,
Who is friendly to Egypt,
And beloved by Atum as prince,
To whose dwelling the land descends.
The great prince of Khatti sends a message
To the prince of Qode:
"Make ready that we hasten to Egypt
And say: 'The will of God has come to pass.'
Let us give praise to Rameses,
Who gives breath to whomsoever he wishes; every country exists according to his desire,
And Khatti solely through his will.
Should the god[10] not accept his sacrifices,
Then it will not see any rain.
It is under the power of Rameses, the bull who loves might."

A series of beautiful songs was composed on the occasion of King Senwosret III's (c. 1882–1845 B. C.) entrance into

[9] The 'sun' referred to is the king. [10] *i. e.*, Rameses.

an Upper Egyptian city, whither the ruler had come to be proclaimed as king of Upper Egypt. After giving the titles, the first song of the populace begins:

Hail unto thee, Kha-kau-Rê', our Horus of divine manifestations,
Who protects the land, and extends its frontier,
Who conquers the foreign countries with his crown,
Who embraces the two lands with his arms,
(Who repulses?) the foreign countries with his arms,
And kills the bow-peoples without even striking with the club;
Who shoots the arrow without drawing the string.
Stricken has his might the cavedwellers in their country,
And his fear has killed the nine bow-peoples.
His slaughter caused the death of thousands
Of the bow-peoples who had attacked his frontier,
Shooting the arrow as Sekhmet[11] does.
He causes thousands to be overthrown among those who do not know his power.
The tongue of his majesty catches Nubia,
And his decrees cause the Bedouins to flee.
Unique youth! who fights for his frontier,
And does not let his subjects get tired,
Who lets the people sleep up to daylight,
And his young recruits slumber, since his heart is their protector.
His commands have made his frontiers,
And his speech joined together both river banks.

The second hymn is as follows:

How the gods rejoice: thou hast caused their offerings to thrive;
How thy children(?) rejoice: thou hast made their frontier;
How thy fathers(?) rejoice who were formerly: thou hast enlarged their (offering) shares;
How the Egyptians rejoice on account of thy strength: thou hast protected the . . . .
How the people rejoice over thy plans: thy might has seized the . . . .

[11] The goddess of war.

How the two river banks rejoice over thy power: thou hast extended what they need;
How thy young folks rejoice over their upbringing(?): thou hast caused them to grow;
How thy venerable ones rejoice: thou hast caused them to be young (again);
How the two lands[12] rejoice over thy power: thou hast protected their walls.

The third song begins each line with the phrase "How great is the lord for his city":

How great is the lord for his city: He alone is a million, small are the other people;
How great is the lord for his city: He equals a dike which holds off the river at its inundation;
How great is the lord for his city: He is like a cool house which lets a person sleep till dawn;
How great is the lord for his city: He is like a . . . . which . . . .
How great is the lord for his city: He is like a place of refuge . . . . his hand;
How great is the lord for his city: He is like a shelter which saves the timid from his enemy;
How great is the lord for his city: He is like the shade of the period of inundation for keeping cool in summer;
How great is the lord for his city: He is like a warm and dry corner at wintertime;
How great is the lord for his city: He is like a mountain which keeps off the storm at the time when the heavens rage;
How great is the lord for his city: He is like Sekhmet against the enemies who step upon his frontier.

The fourth hymn introduces the reason for the king's advent into the city:

He has come to us: He seizes Upper Egypt, the double crown is united(?) in his head;
He has come to us: He has united the two lands; he has brought together the flax and the bee.[13]

[12] *i. e.*, Upper and Lower Egypt.
[13] *i. e.*, the symbols of the king of Upper and Lower Egypt.

He has come to us: He has brought the black land under his rule; he has given the red land unto himself.
He has come to us: He has protected the two lands; he has appeased the two river banks;
He has come to us: He has enlivened Egypt; he has expelled its suffering;
He has come to us: He has revived the people; he has given breath to the throat of the subjects;
He has come to us: He has trampled under foot the foreign countries; he has smitten the cavedwellers, who did not know the fear of him;
He has come to us: He has (fought for) his frontier; he has saved the despoiled. . . .
He has come to us: .....
He has come to us: In order that we (educate) our children and bury our old men. . . .

Out of the great wealth of religious literature which contains a number of hymns to various gods I may select a few to illustrate their character. The first is a hymn to Thoth, the patron god of the scholars, a small statue of whom a scribe had placed in his house. The statue pictures the god as a sitting ape, to whom the scribe addresses the following song:

"Praise unto thee, lord of the house,
Thou ape with white hair,
With handsome form, and friendly nature;
Beloved by all people. He is of *Seheret* stone—he, Thoth,
In order that he illumine the earth with his beauty.
That which is upon his head is of red jasper
And his *bakh* is of carneol.[14]
His loving-kindness is expressed(?) in his eyebrows,
And he opens his mouth to (express) animation.
My house is glad
Since the god did enter into it;
It prospers and is furnished
Since my lord tread upon it.
Be glad, ye people of my quarter,
And rejoice ye, all my neighbors.

[14] Or possibly of transparent quartz, of which a white and a reddish kind came from Ethiopia.

Behold, my lord it is who makes me!
My heart desires him. O Thoth, when thou art a strong one to me,
Then I shall not fear for my eye."

A true appreciation of Egyptian religious songs must necessarily depend, more or less, upon some knowledge of the religious ideas involved. I shall therefore refrain from further comment and give you as a final example of Egyptian poetry the third hymn of the famous Cairo collection of hymns to Amon-Rê'. This hymn, which is one of the most beautiful pieces of Egyptian religious poetry, reveres the solar divinity particularly as the creator and director of the world.

O Rê', who is worshipped in Karnak,
Who appears mightily in the house of the obelisk,
He of Heliopolis, lord of the new-moon festival,
Whom they celebrate in the sixth and the seventh lunar day,
King and lord of all the gods,
Falcon who dwells in the horizon,
Overlord of mankind and the lower world(?),
His name is hidden from his children,
In this his name—Amon.
Hail unto thee who is in peace, lord of joy, and of mighty appearance,
Lord of the crown, with high feathers,
With beautiful diadem and lofty white crown.
The gods love thy sight,
When the double crown rests upon thy head.
Love for thee is spread through both countries,
And thy rays shine into the eyes.
The well-being of mankind is (assured) when thou risest,
When thou shinest forth the animals tire.
Thou art beloved in the southern sky, and pleasant in the northern sky;
Thy beauty seizes the hearts,
And love of thee slackens the arms.
Thy beautiful form relaxes the hands, and the heart forgets when one looks at thee.
Thou alone hast made that which exists,

The only single one, who created the existing (things); out
of whose eyes came forth mankind,
And out of whose mouth the gods came into being.
Who has made the herbs for the cattle,
And the fruit tree for the people,
Who creates that by which the fishes in the river do live,
And the birds, which soar through the sky.
Who gives breath to that which is in the egg,
And nourishes the son of the worm.
Who creates that by which the flies do live,
And likewise the worms and the fleas.
Who creates that which the mice do need in their holes,
And animates the birds on every tree.

Beginning under the Old Kingdom, male and female singers were kept in the temples and the royal palace, under the superintendence of a choir-master, the so-called 'Superintendent of singing.' Under the New Empire, to judge from such titles as that borne by a certain Neferrenpet, who, besides being "superintendent of the singers to Pharaoh," was also "superintendent of the singers to all the gods," it would appear that the sacred music of the whole Empire had been so organized that it was controlled by a single high official. Ladies of rank did not consider themselves too exalted to carry on the office of singers to various divinities. This practice was shared by the noble women of Babylonia; the granddaughter of the illustrious king Naram-Sin, for instance, became a harpist of the moon-god Sin.[15] Among the Egyptian singers in all the periods are to be noted blind persons, who apparently earned their livelihood by singing from house to house, or by amusing with their songs the passersby in the streets and plazas. Some among the professional female singers not attached to the temples went even to Syria and Palestine, thus disseminating Egyptian culture abroad. Their influence, however, was not always of the best. They frequented the public inns, and the book of Sirach 9:4 warns: "Do not have intercourse with a cither-player, in order that thou be not caught in her snares."

[15] *Vorderasiatische Bibliothek*, vol. 1, p. 166, e, 6.